

Satcom1 has come a long way in just seven years. The company set out in 2003, looking to establish itself as a unique source of aero satellite communications expertise. A quick glance down the list of its installations in the years since would seem to suggest it has made a pretty good job of it.

The company has designed and installed Inmarsat-based systems on aircraft ranging in size from helicopters to Airbus 340 and Boeing 747 jumbo jets. While the helicopter solutions focus on tracking, those on business and VIP jets are centred around voice calls, fax, email and internet access, and IPTV, almost all delivered over the Inmarsat network, using Aero-C/M/I/H/H+, Swift 64, and increasingly, SwiftBroadband.

The company also specialises in servicing large aircraft with large communications networks, and currently services 41 per cent of head of state aircraft globally.

Consultative approach

Satcom1 chief executive officer, Karina Larsen, says the company's reputation has been built on a consultative approach to satcomms design and installation, that puts the customer's needs above all else.

"We see a lot of aircraft OEMs today continuing to install lower-specification, voice-only satellite hardware because it is a bit cheaper to buy, but we have had several complaints from customers who want more than voice, and who, in fact, want better quality voice," she says.



Satcom1

This is where Satcom1's consultative approach comes in. Ever since the company's launch, Larsen says she could see that the future would be in high-bandwidth services, enabled by the Inmarsat-4 satellite constellation. So from day one, the company has sought to talk to potential customers who are about to buy a new aircraft, to ask them about their communications needs, and then create a system and a network that will meet them.

"We see our role as ensuring that the customer is aware of what he is buying, so when they tell us they are about to buy an Airbus A319 or a Gulfstream 450, we know what hardware is on board by default, and we know what the alternative options are, so we can guide them to make the right decisions," she says.

When the aircraft concerned is for use by a head of state, Satcom1 is often asked to design the network from scratch, advising on the equipment needed and the running costs, and then liaising with the preferred service centre on the installation, before configuring and activating the equipment on board the aircraft. It's an approach that Satcom1's customers seem to like.

"We offer true engineering support, 24/7," says Larsen. "When you have engineers of the quality of our people, you can offer a very fast turnaround when there is a problem that needs solving."

"When we entered the market six years ago, we found ourselves servicing a lot of the really complex aircraft, where there had been problems waiting for months to be resolved. In most instances, we were able to diagnose the problem in less than a day. And if a router with our AvioIP software is

installed on the aircraft, we can often do this remotely, via SwiftBroadband. I think our customers find us to be a very loyal, technical and innovative partner."

Bespoke software design

Software, in fact, is another very important part of the Satcom1 offering, alongside the company's core airtime and consultancy and integration services.

Through bespoke software design, the company is able to accommodate specific features the customer has requested, such as higher levels of network security on aircraft used by heads of state, for instance.

Larsen cites one example of an aircraft used by a head of state which routinely flies to a country where there is a restriction on which websites can be viewed.

To get round the problem, Satcom1 created a bespoke filter which 'whitelists' acceptable websites while the aircraft is in the country's airspace, blocking access to all others. However, as soon as the aircraft is out of the airspace, the filter is automatically removed.

"We truly believe we are a little bit ahead of the game in software development," says Larsen. "We can design solutions that meet

Daily usage overview - Specify for Date: 02 Oct 2008						
Time	Phone number	Destination	Duration	Cost	Call ID	
14:08:20	3130900090	Netherlands	3:00	0.00	0029234	
11:59:14	3130900090	Netherlands	19:25	0.00	0029234	
09:43:29	3130900090	Netherlands	13:23	0.00	0029234	
00:43:20	09000000	WJ	0:01	0.00	0029234	
07:28:00	21653479960	Netherlands Mobil	7:41	0.00	0029234	
Total				0	0.00	0.00

a whole range of customer requirements, and that can work on a lot of different hardware platforms."

Cost control

Another area of increasing importance to Satcom1's customers, and therefore to Satcom1 itself, is cost control and monitoring. The company has offered a solution called Airtime Monitor for several years. This enables customers to keep on top of airtime costs by alerting them, via text message or email, when their airtime costs reach an agreed threshold every month, week or even on a daily basis.

Contact details: Satcom1, Korskindelund 6, DK-2670 Greve, Denmark
T: + 45 4615 4546 **e:** info@satcom1.com **w:** www.satcom1.com

Inmarsat solutions

Bespoke aeronautical satellite communications solutions, including system and network design, and software development, based around:

- SwiftBroadband
- Swift 64
- Aero I/H/H+/M/C

Individual billing

Airtime provision

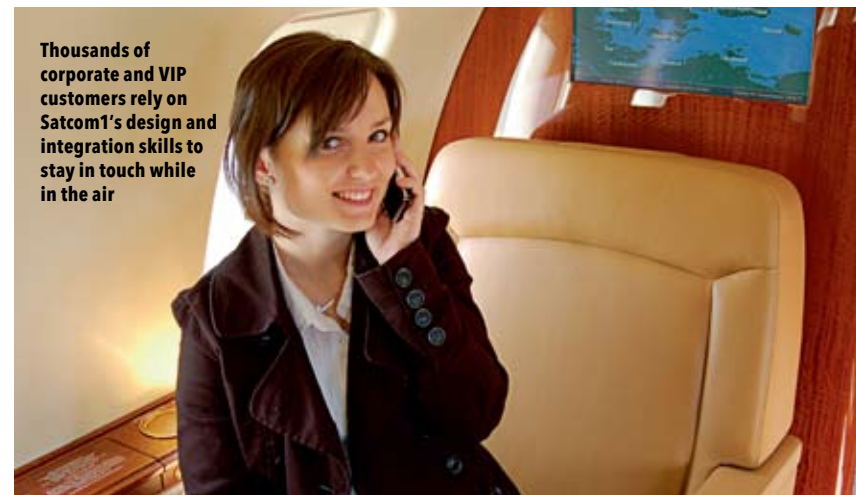
Recently, the company has developed a more sophisticated software solution which enables individual billing on aircraft. (for more on this, see *Via Inmarsat* July - Sep 2009, pp26-28).

This enables an aircraft operator to charge individual users to use the internet or make voice calls via SwiftBroadband, with customers paying for airtime via credit card. The solution is due for launch later this year.

"We're seeing a lot of interest in this," says Larsen. "It will enable aircraft operators, or companies who share ownership of a plane, to allow all their passengers to use Inmarsat services over SwiftBroadband, and to charge a fair price for it."

Satcom1 is also further developing its acceleration technologies that enable users to surf the internet and send and receive emails via SwiftBroadband even more quickly, and at lower cost.

"You always have to think about making everything as efficient and as low cost as possible," says Larsen. "Even heads of state care about operational costs."



Thousands of corporate and VIP customers rely on Satcom1's design and integration skills to stay in touch while in the air